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Universal Transfer Form (UTF) FAQs

Updated April 12, 2012

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Emergency Departments (ED)






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ANSWERS

Question #1

Which healthcare providers are required to use the UTF?

All health care facilities and programs licensed by the Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) are required to use the UTF.

Question #2

Does the individual completing the UTF need to be licensed?

The Department of Health and Senior Services does not mandate who is responsible for filling out the UTF. We understand that you might not always have a licensed person available at your facility at the time of transfer. However, you are required to develop policies and procedures which will need to address who can fill out the UTF.

Question #3

Does a registered nurse have to fill out the UTF?

No. In some instances, a nurse is not always in the facility or the home when the patient is being transferred. If more information is needed the receiving facility can follow up with the sending facility.

Question #4

What is the time frame reflected for the information entered on the UTF?

The information recorded is the information at the time of transfer. Section 2 has the date and time of transfer, at which time the information entered is to be current.

Question #5

Does the UTF need to be completed when transferring a patient from a medical unit to a psychiatric unit within the same facility?

If each unit has a different DHSS license, then YES, the UTF needs to be used. If each unit is on the same DHSS license, the UTF is not required by DHSS. Please note that the Division of Mental Health Services, in the Department of Human Services, has its own transfer requirements for facilities under their aegis, and they may require the use of the UTF.

Question #6

Will this requirement be extended to other licensed healthcare entities, specifically healthcare service firms and nurse registries which are under the Department of Law and Public Safety, Division of Consumer Affairs (DCA)?

DHSS cannot extend the UTF to healthcare service firms or nurse registries because they do not fall under our authority, as they are not licensed healthcare facilities or programs. It would take action by DCA to have the UTF extended to nurse registries and healthcare service firms.

Question #7

What is a PASSR Level 1?

A mental health assessment necessary for every individual being admitted to a nursing home.

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Question #8

What should be included for the physician order attachment in Section 19? Is it just the transfer order?

No, it would be a copy of the transfer order as well as copies of the physician orders for medication and other treatments that are to be provided after discharge.

Question #9

Do we have to complete a UTF for seasonal patients that come from Florida to New Jersey and then return to Florida?

No, the UTF is not required when a patient returns to Florida, or any other state, as the UTF is only required to be used between New Jersey licensed healthcare facilities and programs.

Question #10

Where do we obtain copies of the UTF?

Interactive copies of the UTF are available on DHSS' website for download. If you choose to go to a carbon copy or any other type of UTF, the facility has to have copies made on its own.

Question #11

Can you please give the web address to obtain the UTF?

The web address is <http://web.doh.state.nj.us/apps2/forms/>, and you are looking for the HFEL-7, which is DHSS' designation for the UTF.

Question #12

Do we have to purchase the UTF?

There is no requirement for you to purchase pre-printed forms. You can print the UTF on your own as long as you keep a copy for the medical record and send a copy with the patient.

Question #13

How can I find out if a healthcare provider is licensed by DHSS?

A search for licensed healthcare facilities and providers can be performed on DHSS' website at the following web address, <http://nj.gov/health/healthfacilities/search.shtml>.

Question #14

If a patient is to follow up with a facility outpatient services such as a clinic, will a copy of the UTF be required to be faxed to that clinic?

If the clinic is a healthcare facility licensed by DHSS, then a UTF needs to be sent to the outpatient service.

Question #15

If this went into effect on October 30, 2011, why haven't we seen any patients come in with the UTF?

If you have had patients come in from another licensed healthcare facility or program, the patient was to have arrived with a UTF starting October 30, 2011. Reach out to the sending facility and request the UTF. If there continues to be a problem with missing UTFs or incomplete UTFs from a specific facility, then please call DHSS' complaint hotline at 800-792-9770.

Question #16

What attachments are acceptable, such as an extensive list of allergies?

The rules are to fill out the UTF to the best of your ability and if you can't fit everything on the section or item number you can send it as an attachment and check those attachments in #19. If you don't see the attachment name you can include as other.

Question #17

The expectation is to complete the UTF to the best of our ability. At a minimum what needs to be filled in?

The information that the facility must include on the UTF is the information requested on the UTF that the facility has available.

Question #18

What if you don't know the date of immunization?

If you don't know the last date of immunization, you can't put it down. Leave this section blank. You are only required to complete the portions of the UTF for which you have the information.

Question #19

Can we add not applicable for box number 6, Code Status?

No, if you don't know what the patient's code status is, do not check any of the boxes.

Question #20

If a patient is discharged and case management made a follow-up physician appointment, do we need to send a UTF?

If the physician's appointment is at a licensed healthcare facility, such as an ambulatory care facility, the UTF is required. If the appointment is at the physician's private practice office, the UTF is not required.

Question #21

If a patient from an extended care facility (ECF) comes to the hospital for same day surgery or a radiological procedure and then is sent back to the extended care facility, is the hospital required to complete the UTF?

Yes they will be required to complete the UTF because the patient is being transferred from one licensed facility to another. If go from an ECF to hospital for an x-ray as an outpatient (not admitted to the hospital), are you sure that you want the hospital to do a UTF when the resident returns to the ECF?

Question #22

Is a hospital required to complete a UTF for a patient in for same day surgery?

Yes, a UTF would need to be completed if the same day surgery patient is going to another licensed healthcare facility or program after surgery.

Question #23

What is the expected timeframe of the sending facility to send the UTF to the receiving facility?

The UTF is to go with the patient at the time of transfer.

Question #24

Do I need to use the UTF when sending a patient to an out of state hospital?

No, the UTF is only required in-state with licensed healthcare facilities in NJ.

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Question #25

The 90-day grace period was from Aug 1 to Oct. 30th so everyone should be using this as of October 30th?

Yes, the 90 day grace period ran from Aug. 1st to Oct. 30th.

Question #26

Why is it that there is no place for insurance information on the UTF?

Because insurance information is not relevant to patient care. Often a copy of the face sheet will be attached to the UTF and that usually has insurance information on it. So, you can add the face sheet or include the insurance information on another attachment.

Question #27

Is a UTF necessary when a home health agency refers a patient to outpatient rehabilitation?

If the outpatient rehabilitation facility is a licensed healthcare facility the UTF is necessary. Not all rehabilitation facilities are licensed. If the patient is going to an ambulatory care facility that is licensed, you would send the UTF the first time if the patient will be receiving regular treatment at that outpatient facility. You would only need to send the UTF if there has been a change in the patient's condition.

Question #28

If a patient is going for chemotherapy or radiation treatment more than once is the UTF needed just the first time?

The UTF is required the first time and any time there has been a change in the patient's condition that the chemotherapy or radiation treatment facility needs to be made aware of.

Question #29

Does the transfer form and the UTF have to be sent to the hospital from long-term care?

If the document is required to have the patient transferred, yes, it needs to be sent along with the UTF. If you are referring to a transfer form that your facility has developed, you should examine the need to use that form in light of the requirement to use the UTF.

Question #30

When discharging a patient from IRF can the document travel with the patient to be given to the home health agency nurse when they arrive for their first visit instead of faxing to the home health agency?

No, the document should go from the licensed healthcare facility or program to the other licensed healthcare facility or program. The UTF may be faxed to the HHA.

Question #31

This mandate is only in New Jersey right now, is there any reason why other states have not adopted it and will they in the future?

There are other states that have mandated transfer forms. Massachusetts is the most notable because they mandated the electronic use of their transfer form. Rhode Island also did mandate a form that was five pages long and did not receive support. NJ is somewhat of a trailblazer alongside Massachusetts. It is expected in the era of health information exchanges, a nationwide health information network and EMRs this will become the norm rather than the exception.

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Question #32

Adult Day Care clients usually transfer themselves to a different facility and the original facility doesn't know until after the fact. Are we required to fill out the UTF for the new facility?

No, if you are not aware of the patient's decision to transfer, a UTF is not required. If the patient advises you that they are transferring to another facility, then the UTF is required.

Question #33

If a patient is transferred from an extended care facility to the hospital for a simple procedure and is only there for an hour or two and is sent back to the extended care facility, should the hospital receive a UTF from the extended care facility and then send one back when the patient returns to the extended care facility?

Yes, as both facilities are licensed health care facilities, they would both need to send a UTF with the patient.

Question #34

Can the numbering of the sections on the UTF be changed?

No, the sections must be numbered the same as on the UTF, designated the HFEL-7 by DHSS.

Question #35

If a facility has two separate licenses in one building, does a UTF need to be used if we are transferring a patient between the two separately licensed entities?

Yes, a UTF needs to be used as there are two separate licensed entities involved in the transfer.

Question #36

What about other forms that we may currently use for transfers? Do we still need to use these forms?

The UTF is to be used by all licensed healthcare facilities and programs. Other forms may still be required by a facility's specific provider status or by a facility's or program's own policies and procedures.

Question #37

Has a template been developed for policies and procedures regarding the use of the UTF?

No, there is no template as the Department does not develop policies and procedures.

Question #38

My facility received a patient who came in with a UTF can I just copy it and write no change?

No, you would need to complete a new UTF with the information that you have.

Question #39

If a hospital discharges a patient to an assisted living facility and to a home health agency, how many UTFs need to be filled out?

Two, both the assisted living facility and the home health agency would need to be provided copies of a UTF as both are providing continuity of care.

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Question #40

If a resident is living in an assisted living facility, and the assisted living facility makes arrangements for hospice or wound care through a home health agency, does the AL have to fill out the UTF?

Yes, the assisted living facility must fill out a UTF for both as hospice and home health agencies are licensed health care programs.

Question #41

Does the sending facility need to save a copy of the UTF?

Yes, a copy of every UTF that your facility sends with a patient must be retained as part of the patient's medical record.

Question #42

If a patient is discharged from the hospital with physician orders, where is that information to be recorded on the UTF?

Section 19 has a POS box that would be checked to indicate that the physician orders are attached. You would then attach a copy of the patient's physician orders.

Question #43

Does a health care facility sending a patient to an emergency department need to fill out the UTF?

Yes.

Question #44

Can a facility pre-populate the UTF?

Yes, the UTF can be pre-populated. There is a signature box for the individual who pre-populates the UTF.

Question #45

Do outpatient services need to fill out a UTF if the patient lives at home?

Yes, but only if the licensed outpatient service is arranging services for the patient with a licensed healthcare facility or service.

Question #46

If a patient is discharged to a group home, does the discharging facility need to use the UTF?

No, as group homes are not licensed as health care facilities. The UTF would only be required if the patient is being sent to a licensed health care facility or program.

Question #47

Instead of filling out the whole UTF can I write 'see attached'?

No. The UTF must be completed. Attachments may be attached to the UTF if required by Section 19 or if the attachment has useful information for the patient's care.

Question #48

Does a CCRC have to fill out the UTF if a person is being admitted from the CCRCs unlicensed independent housing units?

No, as independent housing units are not licensed, the UTF is not required. The CCRC may choose to use the UTF if so desired.

Question #49

Why doesn't the UTF address consent to transfer?

That is not the purpose of the UTF, the UTF is a continuity of care document. You still need to document consent for transfer as you normally do.

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Question #50

Section 19 lists a number of possible attachments, what do I need to attach?

If you have an item contained in Section 19, you have to send it as an attachment.

Question #51

How far back do I need to go in regard to the attachments in Section 19?

You should go as far back with the attachments that are relevant to the patient's current condition. For example, if labs are run regularly, you don't need to send them all, but at a minimum the last set of lab results are to be attached.

Question #52

What is the difference between the reason for transfer and the diagnosis?

The reason for transfer is why the patient is leaving your facility or program. The diagnosis is why the patient is at your facility or program.

Electronic UTF

Question #53

Does an electronic version of the UTF need to be identical to the HFEL-7?

No, but the electronic version needs to be substantially similar to the HFEL-7. This means that an item in the upper left hand corner of the HFEL-7 should be in the upper left hand corner of the electronic version, even if it isn't in the exact same spot or in the same font. In addition, the number assigned to each information box on the paper UTF must be assigned to the electronic version of the UTF, as these numbers correspond to the numbers on the UTF instructions.

Question #54

Does an electronic version of the UTF still need to be one page?

Yes.

Question #55

Can a facility or program add items to an electronic version of the UTF?

Items are not to be added to the UTF itself, as the UTF is meant to be a Universal form, but a facility or program can include items deemed relevant as attachments.

Question #56

Is there a mechanism to obtain an electronic version of the UTF at this time for use electronically to email encrypted to another licensed facility?

You can download the PDF version and if you have a way to encrypt it then you can email it to another facility.

Question #57

We send the UTF electronically what happens if our internet service is down?

You'd print a paper copy of the UTF and send it with the patient.

EMS

Question #58

Does the transferring facility have to provide a UTF to EMS as well as the receiving facility?

It is not necessary to provide a copy of the UTF just for EMS, but they need to have access to the UTF being sent to the receiving facility.

Question #59

What do I do if EMS is here and the UTF isn't finished?

Don't wait, send what you have ready with EMS and then follow-up ASAP with the rest of the information.

Question #60

In the event of a 911 call can we fax the UTF later?

We do permit the UTF to be pre-populated. If you have an inpatient facility you should have the basic information already available and then fill out what you can related to the transfer at that time. We don't want you holding up the patient once the ambulance has arrived. EMS has instructions to ask for the UTF when they arrive at a licensed facility. If it's not available they are going to leave at the time. If you can't complete the UTF, then send what you have completed at the time. Once the patient has left the facility you should finish the UTF and send it to the receiving facility.

Question #61

When doing a transport by ambulance do we need to do the transfer form and the UTF to transfer the patient?

The UTF is a continuity of care document. It does not authorize transfer. If your facility/program requires the use of a form to authorize transfer, then you will need to complete your required form in addition to the UTF.

Question #62

How many copies of the UTF do I need to give EMS if the patient is being transported from a nursing home to a hospital via ambulance?

One copy of the UTF needs to be provided to EMS. That copy is to be provided to the hospital.

Medication Information

Question #63

What is the most appropriate medication information to include with the UTF?

A copy of the medication administration record, with the last dose of each medication recorded, is to be attached. Current medication information must be sent. Medication reconciliation, if available, should be attached to the UTF as well.

Question #64

If our medication reconciliation form indicates last dose given do we need to send the MAR which includes staff names?

Yes, because that is the most updated information and the receiving facility is going to need this information.

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Emergency Departments (ED)

Question #65

EDs complete EMTALA forms for transfer to a higher level of care and extended care facility is not a higher level of care so is the requirement than that the ED would be required to fill out an UTF?

No. EDs are totally exempt from completing the UTF and sending it to a receiving facility. Sending facilities would still send the UTF when transferring a patient to the RD.

Question #66

Why are the EDs exempt?

Partly because of the EMTALA requirements and the fact the ED patient is not admitted to the facility.

Question #67

Does the ED have to send a UTF back to the health care facility if the patient is only there for observation?

No, as EDs are exempt from the UTF requirement.

Question #68

Does an extended care facility need to complete the UTF when sending a patient to the ED for G-Tube placement and does the ED have to complete the UTF when returning that patient?

Yes, as a licensed facility sending to another licensed facility which would include EDs you would need to send the UTF. EDs are exempt from the UTF requirement and would not be sending a UTF back. The ED would need to send information that meets the EMTALA standards.

Question #69

Is a hospital required to complete a UTF for a patient who has only been in for observation?

A hospital does not need to complete a UTF for a patient who has been under observation, because they have not been admitted to the hospital and the patient is still under the care of the ED.

Dialysis

Question #70

When a dialysis patient is sent for dialysis access revision to a vascular center does a UTF need to be completed?

Yes, if the vascular center is a healthcare facility licensed by DHSS.

Question #71

If a resident is going to dialysis three times a week does a UTF have to be filled out?

Yes, but only the first time that the resident receives dialysis or if the resident has a change in condition that would affect the dialysis treatment. A new UTF does not need to be sent for every dialysis appointment.

Question #72

If a patient is discharged from the hospital and referred to dialysis, does the hospital need to complete a UTF?

Yes, if the hospital made the arrangements for the patient to receive dialysis. If the patient is already receiving dialysis, a UTF does not need to be completed unless there has been a change in the patient's condition that would affect the dialysis treatment.

Question #73

Are Outpatient Dialysis Centers responsible to send the UTF after every treatment for a resident of a nursing home or assisted living facility?

No, the Dialysis Center wouldn't be using the UTF after every treatment if the resident is going back to a nursing home or assisted living facility. There should already have a mechanism in place to communicate with the facility that's sending the patient to the dialysis center. It's the same for all continuing outpatient care. You would only use the UTF the first time, unless there has been a change in condition.

Question #74

If transferring to another Dialysis unit with a different provider number within the same facility does a UTF need to be completed?

Yes, because it's from one licensed facility to another.

Question #75

Am I required to fill out a UTF for a patient my dialysis unit is sending to the emergency department for an evaluation for perhaps a MI, respiratory distress or psychological episode?

Yes.

Home Health Agencies

Question #76

A home health agency is treating a patient for wound care and sends that patient weekly to a wound care center for follow-up visits with a physician. Is the UTF necessary?

Yes, if the wound care center is a licensed health care facility you are required to send the UTF the first time the patient is sent to the wound care center, or upon a change in condition. You do not need to send a UTF for every repeat visit.

Question #77

If a home health aide is with a patient and calls 911 to send the patient to the hospital, does the home health aide need to send the UTF with the patient?

Yes, the home health agency should probably pre-populate what they can and then have the aide fill-in what the aide can at the time of transfer. Because the aides may not have the medication list or the ability to copy other records, someone at the home health agency's office would then need to access the information and send it to the hospital.

Question #78

Does a home health agency have to fill out the UTF if the patient is going to physical therapy?

A UTF would need to be completed only if the physical therapy is being provided at or by a licensed health care facility. Not all facilities or providers of physical therapy are licensed by DHSS.

Question #79

A patient of a home health agency goes to dialysis three times a week, which was initially set-up by the hospital. Do we, as a home health agency, have to send a UTF as a home health agency to the dialysis center?

If the patient is already receiving dialysis when they come under the care of a home health agency, a UTF does not need to be sent, unless the patient receiving dialysis has a change in condition that would affect the dialysis treatment. A home health agency would need to do a UTF if the patient is not receiving dialysis and the home health agency makes arrangements for the patient to receive dialysis, or if the patient receiving dialysis condition changes in a way that would affect the dialysis treatment.

Question #80

Home health agencies do not refer patients for outpatient chemotherapy, radiation or outpatient physical therapy. The physician usually orders these treatments. Why would the home health agency send a UTF?

If the home health agency gets the physician order and then makes the treatment appointment for the patient, the home health agency would be required to send the UTF.

Question #81

What is the expectation for a home health agency or hospice if they are not present when the patient is transferred to a hospital?

If the home health agency or hospice did not initiate the transfer, the UTF does not need to go to the hospital with the patient. If an employee of the home health agency or hospice tells the patient that they need to go to the hospital, then the home health agency or hospice needs to send a copy of the UTF to the hospital. In the event that you are not initiating the transfer from the home health agency or hospice when you become aware you can then send info to the hospital. If it is a week old than it is appropriate to call the hospital, as by that time the hospital may have the info that they need. (see Comment 10 in the adoption notice).

Question #82

Does the UTF need to be sent to a home health agency? Who gets the completed UTF?

Yes, the UTF needs to be sent to a home health agency if another licensed healthcare facility or program, such as a hospital or long term care facility, is making the arrangements for the home health agency to treat the patient. The UTF, along with other pertinent info, is information that the home health agency needs to ensure continuity of care. The UTF would go directly to the home health agency.

Question #83

If I'm sending a patient home with home care from a home health agency, does the home health agency need a copy of the UTF if the home health agency has access to all the online data?

Yes, if you are making the arrangements for the home care, you need to provide the home care agency a copy of the UTF. You are transferring the patient from one licensed facility or program to another, which requires that the UTF be used.

Question #84

What is expected in the reason for transfer space when a patient is being referred to a home health agency and a referral has already been sent with all pertinent information?

You would put down the reason the patient has been referred to the home health agency and complete the rest of the UTF and send it to the home health agency.

Question #85

Is the UTF required for patients coming from a resident home or rehabilitative facility for a clinic visit, such as wound care or a pacemaker check?

If the patient is coming from the patient's home to a licensed outpatient facility, and the patient is receiving services from a home health agency, the home health agency would complete the UTF if the home health agency made the arrangements. If the patient is in a licensed rehabilitation facility, then the rehabilitation facility would be completing the UTF if the patient is going to a licensed outpatient facility.

Question #86

Hospital referrals to home health agencies do not occur at the time of discharge but can in fact happen a day or two prior to discharge with updates being sent. Patients may be discharged late in the evening, therefore the referral of all info needed would not be sent again, is that ok?

You should be sending the UTF at the time of discharge not with the referral.

Question #87

Does a home health agency need to use the UTF?

Yes, if the home health agency is discharging the patient to another health care service, is transferring the patient to a healthcare facility providing residential care, is sending the patient to the emergency department, or are making arrangements for outpatient services, such as surgery or dialysis, for the patient.